

Handwashing...

*The single most important
means of preventing the
spread of infection*

*The Low-Tech Defense Against
Illness!*

DO IT RIGHT!

Why Worry About It?

- Many disease-causing organisms can't be seen with your naked eye
- Observations in public restrooms revealed that only about 68% of Americans wash up before leaving!
- Even medical personnel are lacking; handwashing rates at one ICU were as low as 30% and never over 48% (1992)

What Can Cause Illness?

- Germs
 - Bacteria
 - Virus
- Spores
- Parasites
- Hazardous chemicals & materials

If They Are On Your Hands...

- You can infect yourself:
 - By touching any entrance to your body
 - Eyes, nose, ears, mouth, etc.
 - Breaks in your skin (cuts, rashes, etc.)
 - By touching food, drink, contact lenses, makeup, and smoking materials before using them

If They Are On Your Hands...

- You can infect others:
 - By touching them
 - By contaminating objects you touch
 - By contaminating areas you occupy
 - By preparing & handling food & drink

Proper Handwashing Can...

- Reduce the spread of common illnesses such as colds and flu
- Help prevent transmission of serious diseases like hepatitis A, meningitis, and infectious diarrhea
- Save lives

Proper Handwashing Can Make a Difference

- The simple act of handwashing, when practiced properly, could save each year:
 - 20,000 lives (hospital patients who acquire secondary infections)
 - Over 80 million cases of food poisoning (resulting in 10,000 deaths)

Do It Right!

- Wet your hands with warm water and apply soap (use a clean bar, or liquid form)
- Vigorously rub hands together, out of the water stream
- Scrub all surfaces thoroughly, especially fingernails; don't forget between the fingers

Do It Right!

- **Wash for 15 to 20 seconds**
 - About the time needed to hum a little tune
 - Scrubbing dislodges the germs
 - Soap keeps dislodged germs from sticking to skin
- **Rinse well**
- **Dry hands on a *clean* towel**
 - Use disposable towels when risk of disease is high

Do It...

- Before, during & after you prepare food
- Before eating, drinking, smoking, applying makeup or contact lenses
- After using the restroom
- After changing a diaper
- Handling animals (especially reptiles) or animal waste
- After contact with anyone's body fluids, or your own (coughing, sneezing, blowing nose)
- When someone in your home or work area is ill
- After contact with garbage or with hazardous and contaminated materials, either known or suspected
- When your hands are visibly dirty

Handwashing...

- *The single most important means of preventing the spread of infection*
- **Extremely effective for everyone**
- ***Make it a habit to DO IT RIGHT***
- ***Teach your loved ones to do the same!***
- ***Do not use antibacterial soaps on a routine basis; they kill good bacteria that can ultimately reduce your immune system***